

In 2019, Burkina Faso made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government adopted a National Strategy to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor and a National Strategy for Children Protection. However, children in Burkina Faso engage in the worst forms of child labor, including farming and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cotton harvesting. The Labor Code does not identify the activities in which children may engage in light work. The government also did not release information on its criminal and labor enforcement efforts and lacked resources for the enforcement of child labor laws.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Burkina Faso engage in the worst forms of child labor, including farming and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Burkina Faso.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	42.1 (2,116,752)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	41.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	21.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		65.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (5)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples, 2010. (6)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Planting, weeding, and harvesting crops, including cotton (1,3,4,7,8) Raising and herding† livestock, including cattle and goats (1,9,10)
Industry	Artisanal mining† of gold, including digging† and crushing† rock, installing dynamite,† working underground,† carrying water and other heavy loads,† and using cyanide† and mercury† (4,7,8,10-18) Quarrying† and transporting heavy loads† while working to extract granite (19,20) Working in carpentry† and construction (9,10)
Services	Domestic work (2,4,9,10,21) Street work, including vending† (2,9,10,19,22)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking ‡(2,4,23) Farming, including production of cotton and livestock raising, domestic work, begging, gold mining, and quarrying, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,4,24) Forced begging in unregistered, thus illegal, Koranic schools (4)

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor per se under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

Burkina Faso is a destination, transit point, and source for child trafficking to and from other West African countries. Child trafficking also occurs within Burkina Faso. (2,4,25-27) Child labor in artisanal gold mining is particularly acute and often exposes children to dangerous chemicals such as cyanide and mercury used in

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the gold extraction process. (1,2,7,28-30) Burkina Faso is the third-largest producer of cotton in Africa, with a reported 250,000 children involved extensively in the production of cotton, primarily on small family farms. (31) Children involved in the production of cotton are exposed to many health risks, including exposure to pesticides, injury from the use of sharp tools, animal bites, and respiratory issues due to the inhalation of cotton dust. (3) In addition, terrorist attacks and mass displacement of people in the north and east of the country resulted in an estimated 765,000 internally displaced persons by February 2020, including a large number of vulnerable children. (4,31,32) In the reporting period, nongovernmental groups recruited children to armed conflict and the government does not have a system in place to handover these children and reintegrate them into society. (33)

Although the Law Orienting the Education System mandates free education until age 16, the costs of uniforms, school-related fees, teacher shortages, and school infrastructure shortfalls in rural areas hinder children's access to education. (34,35) According to Minister of Education Ouaro as of January 30, 2020, there were 2,369 closed schools, affecting 325,245 students and 10,048 teachers with 623 damaged schools. (33) During the reporting period, the government worked with the UNHCR to deploy mobile courts to remote villages to issue birth certificates and national identity documents to qualified citizens. (32) About a quarter of children under age 5 in Burkina Faso lack a birth certificate. Birth certificates are required to attend school, so many of these children remain out of school and vulnerable to child labor. (32,36) To address the problem, the government periodically organized registration drives and issued belated birth certificates. (33)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Burkina Faso has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Burkina Faso's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including unspecified light work provisions.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 152 of the Labor Code; Order Deviating the Age of Admission to Employment (37,38)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 149–150 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of the Hazardous Work List (37,39)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3–6 of the Hazardous Work List; Article 77 of the Mining Code (37-40)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (Cont.)

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 5 and 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3–5 of the Law Suppressing the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; Article 1 of the Law on Combating Trafficking of Persons and Similar Practices (37,41,42)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 1–5 and 14–15 of the Law on Combating Trafficking of Persons and Similar Practices (37,42)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3–4, 7–10, and 20 of the Law Suppressing the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (37,41)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code (37)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	20	Article 2 of the Decree Organizing Operations Related to Convoking the Contingent (43)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 153 and 424 of the Labor Code (37)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 4 of the Law Orienting the Education System (35)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 6 of the Law Orienting the Education System (35)

* No conscription (44)

The light work provisions in the Labor Code are not sufficiently specific to prevent children from involvement in child labor, because activities in which light work may be permitted are not identified in legislation. (37,38)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Security (MFPTSS) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Security (MFPTSS)	Enforces labor laws, including child labor laws and laws on the worst forms of child labor, and establishes a government policy to combat child labor. (45)
Ministry of Women, National Solidarity, and Family (MFSNF)	Removes children from exploitative child labor, provides reintegration services through its mobile unit for intervention, and works with local village surveillance committees on awareness-raising efforts through participation in joint routine inspections with MFPTSS, the lead agency on child labor law enforcement. (46) Operates a free hotline to report child abuse. Maintains civil registry offices in maternity wards to register newborn babies. (47) Uses its National Council for Childhood to oversee all policies for the survival, protection, development, and participation of children in broader policy initiatives. (48)
Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization, and Interior Security (MATDSI)	Oversees criminal cases involving children and women, which are referred to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution, through its Morals Brigade in the MATDSI National Police Force. (49,50) Assists MFPTSS through joint routine inspections related to child labor in the course of actions against traffickers. (46)
Ministry of Justice	Appoints one or more judges who specialize in child protection issues to each high court to oversee juvenile court cases. Collaborates with MFSNF social workers in charge of child protection to conduct investigations on behalf of vulnerable children, including victims of child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, exploitative child labor, and begging. (51)
Parliamentary Network for the Promotion of Child Rights	Trains government officials on children's rights, including child labor laws and other issues affecting children. (52)

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Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, research found no evidence that law enforcement agencies in Burkina Faso took actions to combat child labor (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$126,000 (29)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	255 (29,53)	Unknown
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (29)	Yes (29,37)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (29)	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (29)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (29)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (29)	Unknown
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (29)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (29)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (29)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (29)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (29)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (29)	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (29)	Yes (29,37)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (29)	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (29)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (29)	Yes (4)

Research indicates the labor inspectorate lacks adequate resources to enforce labor laws throughout the country, including the human and financial resources needed to carry out a sufficient number of preliminary labor inspections and follow-up inspections to ensure remediation of notices as part of labor law compliance. (27,29)

Labor inspectors collaborate on an ad hoc basis with the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity, and Family (MFSNF) to provide social services to child labor victims. (34,54) It is unknown how many cases of child labor are identified as a result of complaints made to the MFSNF hotline. (44,53) Furthermore, the MFPTSS publishes an annual report listing 12 types of labor infractions; however, none relate to child labor. (22)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Burkina Faso took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including inconsistent application of victim identification and referral procedures by authorities and frontline responders.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (29)	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (29)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (29)	Unknown
Number of Investigations	Unknown (29)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (29)	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (29)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown (29)	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (27)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (29)	Unknown

Although the government has standard victim identification and referral procedures, authorities and frontline responders do not apply them uniformly. (27,29,55) In 2019, the Ministry of Security trained 250 police officers and gendarmes on the prevention of violence against children, in particular on child trafficking, the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. (4) The government does not publicly release information on its criminal law enforcement efforts.

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Coordination Committee for the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (CNC-PAN/PFTE)	Supervises, evaluates, and oversees implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Chaired by the MFPTSS Directorate to Combat Child Labor and Its Worst Forms. Includes representatives from various civil society organizations, 24 government ministries, and 6 observers from donor countries and international NGOs. (10,22) Research was unable to determine whether CNC-PAN/PFTE was active during the reporting period.
MFPTSS Directorate to Combat Child Labor and Its Worst Forms	Coordinates and leads interagency efforts to combat child labor, including its worst forms; collects information on child labor; and conducts awareness-raising activities. Serves as the Secretariat for CNCPAN/PFTE. (56) Research was unable to determine whether the Directorate was active during the reporting period.
National Committee for Vigilance and Surveillance Against the Trafficking in Persons and Assimilated Practices (CNVS)	Coordinates actions at the national level to combat the worst forms of child labor, including human trafficking. Oversees Committees for Vigilance and Surveillance in each of the regions. (25) MFSNF serves as president and MATDSI is vice president. Includes representatives from MFPTSS, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Women and Gender, and NGOs. (25) Research was unable to determine whether the National Committee for Vigilance and Surveillance was active during the reporting period.
Child Protection Networks	Assist CNVS with coordinating and facilitating the collection of statistical data on human trafficking, specifically the trafficking of women and children. Established by MFSNF, the Networks comprise social workers, magistrates, judges, police officers, health workers, and NGOs in 23 of the country's 45 provinces. (57) Research was unable to determine whether the Child Protection Networks were active during the reporting period.
Cooperative Agreements with other Countries*	Aim to combat cross-border trafficking in children. The government signed a cooperative agreement with Côte d'Ivoire in July 2019, and with Benin and Togo in December 2019. (4)

* Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

Poor coordination among ministries and a lack of resources, such as computers and electricity, continued to hamper the government's ability to coordinate efforts to fully address child trafficking. (29,30)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Strategy to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2019–2023)†	Aims to combat the worst forms of child labor in Burkina Faso. (4)
National Strategy for Children Protection in Burkina Faso (2020–2024)†	Aims to strengthen the institutional, community, and family environment in order to ensure effective protection for children. (58)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

In 2019, the government adopted the National Strategy to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2019–2023) but research was unable to find a publicly available version of the policy. (4) In addition, the National Program of Economic and Social Development included aspects that address child labor elimination and prevention strategies, such as an objective to halve the number of street children by 2020 through the enforcement of existing law. (29,59)

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VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2019, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
National Program for the Fight Against Child Labor on Artisanal Gold Mining Sites and Quarries (2015–2019) [†]	MFSNF program that aimed to prevent and withdraw children from working in artisanal gold mines as part of the government's efforts to eliminate child labor in mining by 2025. (25,47,54,60,61) Sought to strengthen child protection systems, improve coordination among stakeholders, and implement existing legislation. Builds on the previous project (2009–2013) that aimed to eliminate child labor in mines and quarries. (54) Approximately \$42.9 million (40 percent of the program costs) was provided by the government. (47) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Program for the Fight Against Child Labor on Artisanal Gold Mining Sites and Quarries during the reporting period.
USDOL-Funded Programs	Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor II (CLEAR II), a capacity-building project implemented by Winrock International and partners Verité and Lawyers Without Borders. (33) Active in six countries to build local and national capacity of the governments to address child labor. In April 2019, CLEAR II held its final training. (62–64) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
MFSNF Projects to Combat Human Trafficking [†]	Programs aim to combat human trafficking through the operation of transit centers that provide food, medical assistance, and counseling to child trafficking victims and children vulnerable to trafficking. (25,26,55) Transit centers aim to reintegrate victims into their communities and facilitate repatriation of foreign victims when possible. (49) The National Parenting Program assists parents in managing and educating their children to combat child trafficking. (25,57) Nationwide media campaigns to combat human trafficking provide advocacy, raise awareness, and build capacity for key actors involved in child protection issues, including child trafficking. (25,57) Watchdog and monitoring committees ensure that all cases of alleged trafficking of children are reported to the justice system by social workers. (65) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement these programs during the reporting period.
Campaign to Remove Street Children	Project funded by NGO MinWomen, with coordination by the Ministry of Women, Family, and Humanitarian Action, that began in August 2018 and includes outreach missions in the streets to identify and refer vulnerable children, including forced begging victims, to one of the four youth shelters established in the Somgande, Basjuy, Nongremassom, and Cissin districts of Ouagadougou. (27,29) In September 2019, conducted the second annual operation to remove children begging on the streets and provide them with psycho-social support, food, and medical assistance. As a result, 1,578 children were given support and 646 were permanently removed from the street. (4)
World Bank-Funded Projects	Includes a \$51 million Education Access and Quality Improvement Project to support the government in increasing access to preschool education in the two poorest regions and secondary education in the five poorest regions, and improve teaching and education; and a \$50 million Social Safety Net Project to provide income support to poor households and lay the foundation for a basic safety net system in Burkina Faso. (66,67) During the reporting period, the Social Safety Net Project was restructured to add additional funds and extend the closing date until 2020. (68) During the reporting period, the World Bank Education Access and Quality Improvement Project had reach 121,575 persons, above their targeted goal. The program was originally scheduled to close in 2019, but was extended to July 31, 2020. (69)

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Burkina Faso.

Although Burkina Faso has social programs to address the worst forms of child labor in the production of cotton and in gold mining, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem. (2) However, the government converted some abandoned buildings into schools to allow displaced students to finish out the school year. (71)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Burkina Faso (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws determine the activities in which light work may be permitted.	2016 – 2019
Enforcement	Publish statistics on the enforcement of child labor laws, including the labor inspectorate's funding, number of inspectors, number and type of labor inspections conducted and labor violations found, and penalties imposed and collected.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure a referral mechanism between criminal authorities and social services is operational.	2019
	Ensure that labor law enforcement receives sufficient resources to fulfill their mandates, including by conducting an adequate number of inspections and following up after preliminary inspections to ensure remediation of notices to comply with labor law obligations.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure there is initial training for new labor inspectors.	2019
	Establish and publish data on a mechanism to log all calls to the government child protection hotline and track cases of child labor for referral to law enforcement or social services providers.	2015 – 2019
	Include the number of child labor infractions in the Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Security annual report.	2015 – 2019
	Publish statistics on the criminal enforcement of child labor laws, including the number of investigations conducted, violations found, prosecutions initiated, convictions obtained, and penalties imposed.	2016 – 2019
	Ensure that authorities and frontline responders apply standard victim identification and referral procedures uniformly.	2016 – 2019
Coordination	Ensure that coordinating bodies receive adequate resources, such as computers and electricity, to accomplish their mandates.	2015 – 2019
	Enhance coordination and collaboration processes and procedures among ministries, law enforcement, and social services.	2019
Social Programs	Improve access to education by eliminating school-related fees and costs, and increasing the number of schools and teachers in rural areas.	2010 – 2019
	Make efforts to register children at birth to ensure access to social services, including education.	2010 – 2019
	Undertake activities to support the National Program for the Fight Against Child Labor on Artisanal Gold Mining Sites and Quarries projects and the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity, and Family projects to combat human trafficking.	2016 – 2019
	Expand existing programs to fully address child labor in the production of cotton and in gold mining.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure students are provided with adequate schools.	2019

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